

The good news about hell is that a loving God gives us NOT the choice of “eternal life” or “eternal torture,” but of “eternal life” or “eternal death.”

For indeed, *“the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Romans 6:23

Won't you accept Jesus' offer of salvation and choose life, today?

16

Christian awoke in a cold sweat and stricken with terror. He tried to erase the vivid images of the suffering and unutterable anguish of the people writhing in the eternal flames of hellfire from his memory. Could it really be true, that God would torture people forever? Surely, the pastor knew what he was talking about. But the picture of God as a revengeful tyrant plunging the wicked into an eternally burning hellfire had literally been a nightmare. He had to find out the truth if he was ever going to be able to get some sleep. The good news is a thorough Bible study on the topic of hell was just what Christian needed...

1

When you actually bring all the texts together on the topic, it is evident that God does NOT torture the wicked eternally. In addition, the Bible assures us, that while justice requires a sentence of death for those who reject God's mercy, God does not want any to perish. 2 Peter 2:9 says, *“The Lord is... longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*



14

And yet, Satan today continues his lie of *“Ye shall not surely die”* (Genesis 3:4) by convincing people that wages of sin is not death but life in horrible torments, to be endured throughout the endless ages of eternity.

So how does this concept correspond with what the Bible says about eternal fire? Jude 1:7 says Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example of eternal fire. *“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”*

3

The Psalmist said he understood the end of the wicked by looking into the sanctuary. *“Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches...”*

When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”

Psalm 73:12, 16, 17



Of course, there was a pile of ashes from the burnt offering in the courtyard of the sanctuary, but also

12

This idea that eternal fire really means eternal destruction correctly matches what is written in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9.

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”

This fire of hell is not yet burning. Job states, *“That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction... they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.”* Job 21:30 And 2 Peter 2:4,9 state that the unjust and evil angels are “reserved” *“unto the day of judgment.”*

5

In addition, Matthew 25:41, 46 again parallels “everlasting fire” with “everlasting punishment” while contrasting “everlasting punishment” with “life eternal.”

“Then shall he [the King] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:.. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Matthew 25:41, 46

10

This punishment happens in the time period of the “second death” which Revelation 20 and 21 describe as following a particular 1000-year period at the end of time. Revelation 21:8 records, *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*



7

2 Peter 2:6 makes clear that Sodom and Gomorrah are turned into ashes. *“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;”*

Even though Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24, 25) are described as suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, they are not still burning today. Instead, it is the resulting destruction that lasts forever. In the Bible, we find that the word eternal or forever can sometimes mean “until completed.” (Exodus 21:6, 1 Samuel 1:22, Jonah 2:6)

4

Psalm 37:20 says,
“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”



The Bible gives abundant evidence that in order to destroy sin, God will allow the fires of hell to burn up the wicked until they die and consume away or become ashes.

13

Since all truth radiates from Christ, a good place to begin our Bible study is John 3:16. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Here we see God’s loving, giving, merciful nature portrayed in direct contrast to that of a tyrant. In addition, we find “perish” contrasted with “eternal life.” This is similar to Romans 6:23 where “death” is contrasted with “eternal life.” The opposite of eternal life is eternal death, not an eternal life of torment.

2

Ezekiel 33:11 reiterates God’s position toward the wicked.
“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”



15

So the Bible says the lake of fire ends in death. And the scriptures make clear in Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 that even hate, and envy, and knowledge of anything all perish with death. *“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.”*

Matthew 10:28 adds that the soul and body are both destroyed in hell.

8

Indeed, the plain truths of these texts leave no room for a belief in the eternal conscious torment of the wicked.



Although according to Mark 9:45 hell is a fire *“that never shall be quenched,”* Jeremiah 17:27 also speaks of fire in the palaces of Jerusalem that *“shall not be quenched.”* Again, this just signifies the fire burning is unable to be put out until it has finished its work.

9

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

2 Peter 2:4

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to

be punished.” 2 Peter 2:9

(See also 2 Peter 3:6,7)



6

According to Malachi’s description of the fiery punishment of the wicked, it leaves them as *“stubble”* and *“ashes.”*

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch...

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 4:1, 3

11